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LAFAYETTE VISTAS

Community Park Update

BALLFIELDS BEING BUILT: The groundwork for Lafayette's 68-acre community park in Burton Valley is well underway, with 70% of Phase I construction complete. The two ballfields and the overlying soccer fields have been cleared, graded and covered with a sandy base for proper drainage. The next stage is an expensive issue of color: turning brown fields green. Parks and Recreation Commissioner Geoffrey Bellenger, who fondly calls the new park "a glorious piece of property," is helping raise funds to sod the playing fields. Sod is the preferred surface as it can most likely establish itself in time for baseball in the spring, but will cost an estimated $40,000, some of which will need to be raised privately *(see following article)*. If the fields are seeded — a less expensive option — they will not be ready for the first "play ball" of baseball season in the spring.

FOUNDATION SEEKS DONATIONS: The Lafayette Community Parklands Foundation hopes to pick up where the City leaves off by providing the balance of the funds needed to finish the park. Depending on the generosity of community members, the foundation will fund basics such as sod, bleachers, water fountains and parking lot paving. Someday, the foundation envisions funding picnic areas and open meadows at the north end and a bridge linking the park to the Community Center. Foundation members don't even mention their wildest dream: flush toilets for park visitors! To donate to the completion of the new park, send a check to the Lafayette Community Parklands Foundation, P.O. Box 487, Lafayette, CA 94549. If you have questions, please call Foundation President Mike Collier at 283-9073. Donations are tax deductible.

Local Literary Treasure

If Lafayette were to rank its local treasures, the Book Room would be right up there with Millie's Kitchen, the Town Hall Theatre and the Lafayette Reservoir. This local literary gem is brimming with over 30,000 books, tapes, records and maps that go on sale twice a month starting at the bargain price of 50¢. The most valuable find, a $300 autographed hardback by Henry James, is a rare occurrence. Most books go for around a buck.

Volunteers: (L to R) Doris Duncan, Suzanne Boldt, Sally Bellenger, Jan Lothrop, Nancy Whyte

Located in one of the converted classrooms at the Lafayette Community Center, the Book Room's repertoire ranges from Beowulf to Newt Gingrich, from Repairing VW Bugs to Raising Chickens. Book lovers can find information on virtually any topic at the semi-monthly book sale held by the Friends of the Lafayette Library on the 1st and 3rd Saturday from 9am to noon. Admission is free. Bring the kids. The children's book section is a bargain bonanza.

The forerunner to Lafayette's Book Room began in 1967 as a roving book sale that raised funds for the community library. The concept was launched by a group called The Friends of the Lafayette Library who wanted to enhance the library's collection of art books and phonograhic records. Residents were asked to donate old books which the "Friends" then resold in front of the library or at book sales in rented rooms at local schools. Since 1985, the Book Room has been permanently housed at the Lafayette Community Center thanks to the cooperation of the City Council.

The Book Room is a good example of grassroots fund raising. In its first year, the then-movable book 'room' generated

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Historic Snapshots

Part 2: Our Town Takes Shape

Welcome to the second installment of "Historic Snapshots", our ongoing series on the history of Lafayette. This issue highlights the formative years of commercial Lafayette, including the activities of Lafayette's forefathers, the first commercial buildings, and the naming of the town.

In the late 1840s, Lafayette consisted of a few farms, a handful of settlers and the beginnings of a commercial center, built to service the teamsters and bullwhackers who drove the ox carts between the Moraga redwood mills and Martinez. Lafayette was a yet-to-be-named fertile hamlet of prime grain growing land.

Hough's store, built in 1867, was located on what is now 3535 Plaza Way. The building still stands, remodelled, as HandleBar Toys.

Lafayette's first commercial businesses were established around 1850, and were situated on Golden Gate Way, west of Second Street. They included a blacksmith's shop, a bar, a general merchandise store and rooming houses.

In 1848, community founder Elam Brown built his first of three homes in Lafayette with lumber from the Moraga redwoods. From start to finish, construction took one month. The dwelling had no floor,

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Historic Snapshots

Continued from front page

no electricity, no plumbing, no foundation and no inspectors! Once the home was completed, Brown and his neighbor Nathanial Jones planted rye, oats and wheat on their ranches and traveled to the nearest mill in San Jose with their harvest. They quickly tired of the 7-10 day trip to San Jose, so Brown built his own horse-drawn grist mill. The business prospered and Brown installed a steam powered mill on Lafayette Creek near First St. to process his harvest and to service the farmers in the surrounding area. Once the new mill was built, the commercial center of Lafayette began to grow near the mill at the present-day intersection of Mt. Diablo Blvd. and Moraga Rd.

A community party at Lafayette's first school. Built in the early 1850s, the school's first teacher was Easterner, Benjamin Shreve. Photo circa late 1800s.

Brown's wife, Margaret Allen Brown, despised the dirt floor in their first home so Brown built their next home on Moraga Rd. near the mill in 1856. Before the Brown family moved in, February rains flooded both the home and the mill. The Brown's decided to seek higher ground and started construction on their third and final home at present-day 32 Lafayette Circle. According to the 1860 census, in addition to their 15 children, the Brown household included eight servants, two inside servants, and one butcher.

In the early 1850s, Benjamin Shreve and Milo Hough joined the core group of early settlers. Shreve, a school teacher from the East who had failed to make his fortune in the gold fields, was on his way home when he was persuaded by Brown to stay and establish Lafayette's first school, located on Golden Gate Way between First and Second St. Hough built The Lafayette House, the town's first hotel on the corner of Moraga Rd. and Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Hough was appointed postmaster of the area which was given the name Acalanus, a variation on the spelling of Acalanes. Hough stayed in Lafayette two years before moving on to Walnut Creek where he opened his second hostelry. Shreve gave up teaching to go into the retail business in 1855. He opened the town's second general merchandise outlet that, after a relocation and renaming, came to be known as The Pioneer Store.

The naming of Lafayette is a matter of much debate, but postal documents show Lafayette was officially named "La Fayette" in 1857. Between 1848 and 1857 the community had a number of assumed names, including: Dog Town, Brown's Corner, Brown's Mill, Acalanus and Centerville. When Shreve was appointed postmaster in 1857, he requested the community name of Centerville. Since this name was already taken, he made his second choice: La Fayette. It wasn't until 1932 that La Fayette was officially renamed Lafayette.

Next Issue: Pony Express, Plaza Park, Lumbering Leaves Lafayette.

Photos provided by and printed courtesy of the Lafayette Library Historical Archives. Thanks to Bill Wakeman and the Lafayette Historical Society for their ongoing contributions to this series.

Local Literary Treasure *(Continued from front page)*

$602. Today, the Book Room is one of the largest and most comprehensive in the county and raises over $25,000 annually for the sole benefit of the Lafayette Library. Since its inception, the Book Room has raised over $260,000 for the local library to pay for new books, books on tape, periodical subscriptions, furniture and operating expenses.

In recent years, the Book Room has raised enough money to extend the Lafayette Library's hours by one full day a week. The "Friends" current goal is to stretch library hours from 29 to 39 hours a week. This extension of services, however, will cost an additional $50,000. Recognizing the importance of this goal to the community, the Lafayette City Council has agreed to match, dollar for dollar, all funds raised by the "Friends" until the $50,000 goal is reached.

Everything in the Book Room is donated, from the old wooden apple boxes overflowing with volumes to the homemade felt signs that lead customers from Mysteries to Cookbooks to How To. Four elements are key to the Book Room's success: a leader with vision, a solid team of 50 volunteer helpers, hundreds of generous book donors, and over 2600 regular patrons annually.

"The people who organize the Lafayette Book Room deserve a very large community pat on the back," says Joan Bruzzone, a Lafayette resident and Book Room patron. Bruzzone is a travel agent who picks up invaluable resource material for bargain prices at the Book Room. Her estimated annual used book purchases exceed 100 books. Says Bruzzone "The Book Room has done a lot of good for a lot of people."

BOOK DONATIONS: If you'd like to donate books, books on tape, tapes, maps, audio compact discs or records, please leave them at the Book Room on the day of the sales or at the Lafayette Library during business hours.

DOLLAR DONATIONS: The "Friends" are also raising funds to extend library hours on Tuesdays, Saturdays and two evenings each week. The City Council has agreed to match each contribution. That means a $20 contribution from your family actually generates $40 toward the fund. If you'd like to contribute, send your check to: Friends of the Lafayette Library, 952 Moraga Rd., Lafayette, CA 94549. Donations are fully tax deductible.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHICS: If you are a National Geographic fan (and who isn't?) the Book Room has a surplus of these publications on sale for 10¢ apiece.

BOOKMARK DESIGN CONTEST: One of the most productive activities the Friends sponsor each year is the design-a-bookmark contest. The contest, which occurs in the spring, has been an annual event for the past eight years. It is open to all Lafayette students, grades 1 through 8. All entries are displayed in the local library.

Road & Drain Progress Report

#	Project Name (not in priority order)
A	Acalanes Rd: Hidden Valley Rd to City limits
B	Acalanes Rd: El Nido Ranch Rd to Hidden Valley Rd; Marianne Dr, Valente Ct
C	Avalon Ave / Solana Dr / Acampo Dr / Hamlin Rd
D	Condit Rd
E	Deer Hill Rd: First St to Pleasant Hill Rd
F	Dewing Ave / Boyer Circle
G	Diablo Circle / Middle Rd
H	Dolores Dr: Mt. Diablo Blvd to Highway 24
I	Doreen Way
J	Dyer Dr Storm Drain
K	El Curtola Blvd
L	El Nido Ranch Rd: Mt. Diablo Blvd to Hwy 24 Ramps
M	First St: School St to Golden Gate Way, Moraga Blvd, Moraga Rd to Victoria Ave
N	Glen Rd / No. Thompson Rd / Oak Hill Rd / Orchard Rd
O	Glenside Dr: St. Mary's Rd to Reliez Station Rd
P	Goyak Dr
Q	Hampton Rd / Woodland Way / Walnut Dr
R	Happy Valley Rd: Upper Happy Valley Rd to Deer Hill Rd
S	Hidden Valley Rd
T	Los Arabis Dr
U	Los Palos Dr
V	Martino Rd
W	Moraga Blvd: Victoria Ave to Carol Lane
X	Mosswood Dr / Webb Lane
Y	Mt. View Dr: Mt. Diablo Blvd to Brook St
Z	No. Peardale Dr / Camino Vallecito / So. Peardale Dr
AA	Old Tunnel Rd
BB	Ortega St / Perales St / Palomares St
CC	Quandt Rd
DD	Reliez Valley Rd: Pleasant Hill Rd to Silver Dell Rd
EE	Reliez Valley Road: Silver Dell Rd to City limits
FF	Rohrer Dr
GG	Sibert Ct
HH	Sierra Vista / Robles Ct / Serrano Ct
II	Springhill Rd
JJ	St. Mary's Rd at Driftwood
KK	St. Mary's Rd: Glenside Dr to Rohrer Dr
LL	St. Mary's Rd: Rohrer Dr to City Limits
MM	Sweet Dr
NN	Upper Happy Valley Rd
OO	Windsor Dr

Partially Completed or In Progress Completed

Work has begun on several projects funded by Lafayette's Road & Drain Tax.

Around Town

October **EARTHQUAKE PREPAREDNESS MONTH!** – The Lafayette Emergency Preparedness Commission is offering several classes this month for all residents interested in helping people help themselves during a natural disaster. Call 284-7179 for information.

- *How to Organize your Neighborhood:* Oct. 5 or 9, 7:30 pm, Lafayette School Auditorium.
- *First Aid:* Oct. 12, 7:30 pm, Lafayette School Library.
- *What to do when there's a Power Outage:* Oct. 17 or 25, 7:30 pm, Lafayette School.
- *CB Emergency Radio Demonstration:* Oct. 24, 8:00 pm or Oct. 28, 9:00 am, Lafayette Community Center.
- *Introduction to Search and Rescue:* Nov. 9, 7:00 pm, Lafayette School Auditorium.

Oct. 7 & 21 **USED BOOK SALE** – Bookworms take note! The Friends of the Lafayette Library have thousands of used books from which to choose. All sales benefit the Lafayette Library. 9:00 am to Noon, Lafayette Comm. Ctr.

Oct. 29 **LAFAYETTE RESERVOIR RUN** – Join 1,000 runners & walkers on one of Northern California's most beautiful courses. Celebrate Halloween and run in costume. Registration information: Chamber of Commerce, 284-7404.

Oct. 31 **HALLOWEEN FUN SHOW** – Maze scare, pumpkin drawing, treats for all, and a special show. Come in costume! Kindergartners and under: 1:30 pm, K through 5th grade: 3:15 pm, Lafayette Comm. Ctr.

Nov. 7 **CITY COUNCIL ELECTION** – Four candidates are running for three seats in this year's election.

Nov. 17 **COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING BREAKFAST** – Join friends & neighbors for a breakfast celebrating our good fortunes. 7:30 am, Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church. Information: Chamber of Commerce, 284-7404.

Nov. 19 **"SAVE TOWN HALL" FUND-RAISER** – Help save one of Lafayette's most historic buildings. Appetizer, wine reception and a performance of "Melrose Stories" by the Town Hall Theater. $25. Tickets or information: 284-4549

Nov. 27 **MEET YOUR NEW CITY COUNCIL**– A special meeting & reception. 7:00 pm, Laf. Comm. Ctr.

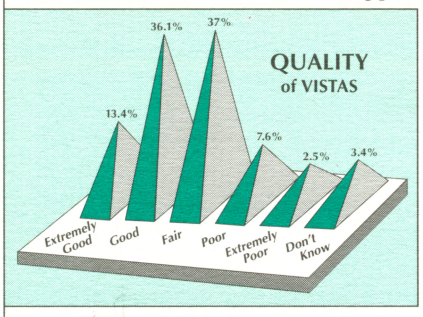
Dec. 2 & 3 **LAFAYETTE WINTER FESTIVAL & BOUTIQUE** – Great food, hot cider, arts & crafts, choral groups and a visit from Santa. 10 am – 4 pm, Lafayette Comm. Ctr.

Dec. 16 **"MOUSECRACKER" PUPPET SHOW** – A show celebrating the joy of the holiday season. $3/adults, $2/children. 1:00 pm, Lafayette Comm. Ctr.

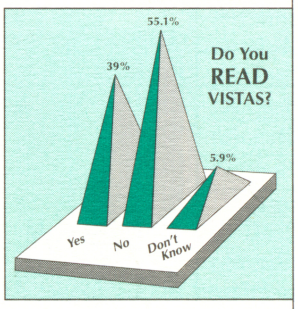
Dec. 19-22 Dec. 26-29 **HOLIDAY CAMP FOR KIDS**– Holiday arts, crafts, games, songs and special events. 9 am – 1 pm each day. K through 4th grade. $79/week. Information: Lafayette Comm. Ctr., 284-2232.

Letter from the Editor

We recently surveyed over 300 Lafayette residents to find out if they are reading this newsletter. The bad news is that only 39% of those polled indicated that they do read **VISTAS**, while a disappointing 55% said they do not read it. The good news is that, of the people who *are* reading **VISTAS**, nearly 50% said that the quality of the newsletter was extremely good or above average, and 87% generally approved of the publication. Only 10% rated **VISTAS** as "poor" or "extremely poor."



The readership figures suggest that folks are either (1) not receiving the newsletter, or (2) getting the newsletter, but not sitting down to read it. In order to alleviate the first problem, beginning with this issue we are sending the newsletter to individual addresses rather than to "postal patrons" and as regular, rather than bulk, mail. Hopefully this will keep residents from confusing the newsletter with the gaggle of advertising leaflets that are sent bulk. We have also decided to publish **VISTAS** more often, increasing the issuance from two to three times per year. The newsletter will now be published in January, May and September.



The second symptom suggests that **VISTAS** could be made more interesting and relevant to Lafayette residents. In order to do so, however, we need your help. If you have a story idea or other suggestions on how **VISTAS** can be improved, please forward your ideas to me. You can fill out the following form and fax or mail it to me.

Thank you in advance for your response,

VISTAS Quality Improvement Survey

	YES! I enjoy this item. Please continue it.	NO! I do not find this useful. Discontinue it.
Historic Snapshots: *Snippets of Lafayette's History*	☐	☐
Fix-It Ticket: *Requests for maintenance*	☐	☐
Around Town: *A calendar of upcoming local events*	☐	☐
On The House: *Tips for maintaining your home*	☐	☐
Road & Drain Report Card: *Progress on repairs funded by special tax*	☐	☐
City Budget Updates: *Status reports on the City's financial condition*	☐	☐
Parks Progress: *Updates on Community Park construction and fundraising*	☐	☐
Human Interest Stories: *Detailing the work of exceptional volunteers, etc.*	☐	☐

Other topics that I'd like to see covered or changes I'd like to see made to VISTAS include:

_____

_____

_____

City Directory

Officers

Gayle B. Uilkema	**Mayor**
Ivor Samson	**Vice Mayor**
Anne Grodin	**Council Member**
Donald L. Tatzin	**Council Member**
Judy Garvens	**Council Member**

The City Council meets at 7:00 pm on the second and fourth Monday of the month at the Lafayette Community Center, 500 St. Mary's Road.

Staff

Robert F.D. Adams	**City Manager**
Steven B. Falk	**Assist. City Manager**
Niroop K. Srivatsa	**Comm. Dev. Director**
Mark Lander	**City Engineer**
Mike Henn	**Planning Serv. Mgr.**
Jennifer Russell	**Parks and Recreation Director**
Ed McNair	**Public Works Supt.**
Sue Jusaitis	**City Clerk**
Gregg Moore	**Police Services Mgr.**

City Offices and Police

Street Address:	**3675 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Suite 210**
Mailing Address:	**P.O. Box 1968 Lafayette, CA 94549-1968**

City Telephone Numbers

Administration:	**284-1968**
Engineering:	**284-1951**
Planning:	**284-1976**
Parks and Rec:	**284-2232**
Public Works:	**283-6271**
Senior Services:	**284-5050**
Police Business:	**284-5010**
Police Emergency:	**911**

LAFAYETTE VISTAS

is published for the residents of Lafayette and reports on issues, people and events that affect our city. As a member of this community, you are encouraged to contact us with your questions and comments. We request all correspondence be sent to:

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